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ANN: Here, to begin with, is our commentary on Brezhnev's Sofia visit.

VOICE I: Dear listeners, the Sofia press and radio have been competing for days on end, uninterruptedly, and in an increasingly more servile tone, to emphasize the importance of Soviet-Bulgarian relations and of the visit of the Soviet Party-Governmental delegation. As on other similar occasions, the visit of the Soviet delegation in May 1962 headed by Nikita Khrushchev, for instance, statesmanlike reasoning has made way for declarations and statements that are beneath the national dignity of the Bulgarian people. The "escalation of exaltation", if one can say so, took such forms which could not by any means fail to disgust the more sober-minded and cool-headed Bulgarian citizens. In fact, it was made to seem as if Soviet-Bulgarian relations rested exclusively on emotional feelings, such as the "eternal recognition and love", the expression again used so often these days that it has lost all of its meaning and content and at the same time also completely depreciated the national purpose of these relations. Things have gone so far, that when appraising economic relations, Bulgaria's imports from the Soviet Union are treated by Sofia propaganda as if they were some special Soviet alms or goodwill, as though the Soviet Union received nothing in exchange for its exports to Bulgaria! And everyone knows that the Soviet Union's trade relations with other Communist countries are based on the principle of "mutual advantage" and that almost 60% of Bulgarian annual exports are northward bound.

But after the arrival of the Soviet delegation, dear listeners, this servility and lack of national self-respect, reflected by propaganda, assumed an entirely official character. As soon as the visitors landed on Bulgarian territory, the Soviet delegation and Brezhnev were showered with such compliments by Zhivkov, that many a Bulgarian heart must have sunk in shame and bitterness. Zhivkov's speech at Sofia airport has been printed by all the newspapers and everyone is free to weigh it up and compare it with the reserved speech of Brezhnev. Moreover, if we compare yesterday's Zhivkov speech with the one which he made in 1962, on the arrival of the Soviet delegation which was headed by Nikita Khrushchev, we shall notice an obvious verbal "escalation", just as if nothing had occurred in Bulgaria or in the minds of the Bulgarian people in the past five years! I cannot say whether Brezhnev was bored by the lyrical, school-boy-like, I would call them, declamations of the Bulgarian First Secretary and Prime Minister, who raises to a cult and "law" Soviet-Bulgarian friendship and the "warm affection and attachment the Bulgarian people have for the great Soviet Communist Party." This friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, Zhivkov considers

"the surest guarantee for the freedom and independence of Bulgaria." Naturally, this incredible exaggeration is hardly going to serve as an inspiring example for the efforts of any patriotic circles in the country, set on lifting up the down-trodden national self-respect, nor will it restore their faith in their own strength and the possibilities of the Bulgarian people.

Further on Zhivkov defined relations between the Soviet Union and Bulgaria as "model relations between two socialist countries, resting on the granite bases of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism", thoroughly ignoring those most essential principles, ensuring independence and sovereignty, namely - equality and non-interference in internal affairs. When presenting his credentials and referring to Soviet-Bulgarian relations, the new Soviet ambassador also failed to mention these two basic principles in international relations. In his speech at the ceremonial dinner party, Brezhnev referred to this "internationalism", a thing which can be interpreted in many different ways, depending on the circumstances, and which has often constituted interference in the internal affairs of another country. Brezhnev, according to Sofia Radio, "highly appraised the sense of internationalism, which is so strongly developed among the Bulgarian people". He wanted with this, maybe sarcastically, to sum up the verbal exaltations of Zhivkov and Traikov about "devotion and love, eternal and indestructible friendship", which did not find their equal in the rather dry and businesslike speeches of Brezhnev. Without question, the Bulgarian and Soviet statements to date are a clear indication of the existing inequality in relations, of the obvious subordination, underlined with such pains by the Bulgarians. Is such servility expected by the Soviets, or is it still a political habit dating from the days of Stalin, which the Bulgarian leaders find so hard to drop? It is interesting to observe that at the dinner party, the welcoming speech to the Soviet guests was made by Traikov, not by Zhivkov. Could it be that Zhivkov wanted to share with others the responsibility for the so very one-sided development of Soviet-Bulgarian relations?

The purpose of the Soviet delegation, according to Brezhnev, is to sign a new bilateral treaty of friendship and mutual assistance. If this is true, then one cannot help puzzling over its formation. For such a treaty is an important inter-state act. But instead of the leader of state, who is Prime Minister Kosygin, or Foreign Minister Gromyko, we find it includes persons of whom one might say, with the exception of Brezhnev, that they belong among the lesser ornaments. True, the draft of this treaty is already ready, since it was worked out in advance, and discussions are hardly going to take place over it. Nevertheless, a

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solemn inter-state treaty ought to be signed by the Soviet Prime Minister, together with his Bulgarian counterpart, as the top representatives of the governments of their respective countries. Even though to some extent a formal question, it does prove all the same, that also in this instance inequality exists, which will once again not escape the alert eyes of the Bulgarian public.